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(54) Internal combustion engine with adaptive control of compression ratio.

(57) An internal combustion engine having variable intake valve timing mechanism (20) to control the compression work performed by a piston (12) slidably housed within a cylinder (14) of the engine, so as to avoid knocking operation while allowing maximum use of exhaust energy in the event that the engine is equipped with a turbocharger.

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The present invention relates to a system and method for controlling the charging of an internal combustion engine's cylinders so as to improve fuel efficiency and to increase peak power while preventing engine knock.

With the advent of electronic engine controls, it has been common to control knocking in spark-ignited internal combustion engines by adjusting the spark advance in response to sensed engine knocking. In turbocharged engines, however, adjustment of spark timing is frequently not sufficient to prevent knock. Accordingly, wastegating is used with conventional turbocharged engines to prevent excessive intake air charging pressure at higher engine speeds. During wastegating, some of the exhaust gas bypasses the turbocharger and the residual energy of the bypassed fraction, which could otherwise be used to drive the gas turbine, is lost. The present invention proposes to control engine knocking by adjusting the compression ratio of the engine in response to either sensed knocking or in response to other engine operating parameters indicating that the engine is operating in a regime in which knock may occur. This is especially useful with turbocharged engines. With a turbocharged engine, the present invention improves engine fuel efficiency and power output by allowing the fraction of total compression work performed by the piston to be reduced, while the fraction of total compression work performed by the turbocharger is increased.

U.S. Patent 4,958,606 discloses an engine having a conventionally wastegated turbocharger control system to control turbo boost and which measures engine load and adjusts an intake manifold restrictor element in response to such load. It is an object of the present invention to obviate the need for wastegating in turbocharged or supercharged engines operated with variable valve timing.

It is an advantage of the present invention that costly, troublesome wastegating may be avoided with both turbocharged and supercharged engines; this will yield improved fuel efficiency and increased peak power.

A reciprocating engine, including at least one piston slidably housed within a cylinder, has a knock sensor for identifying knocking in the engine and for generating a knock signal in response to the sensed knocking, and a control unit for receiving a knock signal and for operating a variable valve timing mechanism in response thereto. The variable valve timing mechanism actuates one or more intake valves associated with the cylinder, with the valves being operated so that the timing of the intake valve closing is altered when knocking is sensed. Alternatively, the control unit may operate a variable compression ratio mechanism so that the engine's compression ratio is decreased when

knocking is sensed. If a turbocharger is used, it may be employed according to the present invention without a wastegate so that the turbine expander portion of the turbocharger receives all the exhaust flowing from the engine under all operating conditions. The control unit may utilise signals relating to speed, load, knocking, or other engine operating parameters, so as to adjust the variable valve timing mechanism such that the overall compression work performed on the air charge by both the turbocharger and the engine's pistons is limited to an amount at which the engine will not knock.

The invention will now be described further, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of an engine equipped according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is a pressure-volume ("P-V") diagram for a non-wastegated turbocharged engine according to the present invention and having variable early intake valve closing.

Figure 3 is a P-V diagram for a non-wastegated turbocharged engine according to the present invention, operated with variable late intake valve closing.

Figure 4 is a P-V diagram according to another aspect of the present invention in which clearance volume of a non-wastegated turbocharged engine is adjusted to achieve knock-free operation.

Figure 5 is P-V diagram for a conventional prior art engine having a wastegated turbocharger.

Figure 1 illustrates an engine system according to the present invention in which a piston, 12, is slidably housed within a cylinder, 14, which is provided with air/fuel mixture via an intake valve, 16, which is located in cylinder head 17. Intake valve 16 controls the flow of intake charge via an intake manifold, 34, from a turbocharger, 18, and an optional intercooler, 32. Turbocharger 18 is run without a wastegate; its effective boost is limited either by an adjustable valve timing mechanism, 20, or alternatively, by a compression ratio adjustment mechanism, 28. Those skilled in the art will appreciate in view of this disclosure that a system according to the present invention could be used with a wastegate having a limited range of authority, as compared with conventional wastegating systems. It will be further appreciated that a system according to the present invention could be used with engines having multiple turbochargers.

Valve timing mechanism 20 and compression ratio mechanism 28, which may comprise any of the several known arrangements for accomplishing such functions, are operated by control unit 30, which receives inputs from knock sensor 22, or from engine speed sensor 24, or load sensor 26.

These sensors are all engine operating parameter sensors which generate output signals having values which correspond to the value of the sensed parameter. Control unit 30, using a lookup table system or other operating strategy known to those skilled in the art and suggested by this disclosure, will read the sensed engine operating parameters, as indicated by the output signals and adjust the engine's valve timing or compression ratio accordingly, by issuing a valve timing change signal or compression ratio change signal. For example, if the speed and load inputs exceed predetermined values, the control unit may direct valve timing mechanism 20 to close the intake valve early. An example of a valve timing mechanism suitable for use in a system according to the present invention is described in allowed U.S. patent application 07/680221, filed April 4, 1991, which is assigned to the assignee of the present invention and which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

Knock sensor 22 will sense knock in engine 10 and generate a knock signal in response to the sensed knocking. Upon receipt of a knock signal, control unit 30 operates variable valve timing mechanism 20 to either close intake valve 16 early as shown in Figure 2 or late as shown in Figure 3. Alternatively, control unit 30 may be used to alter the compression ratio by operating compression ratio mechanism 28 as shown in Figure 4. As noted previously, those skilled in the art will appreciate in view of this disclosure that any of the known valve timing mechanisms or compression ratio altering mechanisms may be used to control compression pressure in an engine according to the present invention.

Turning now to the P-V diagram for a conventional turbocharged engine shown in Figure 5, the intake stroke occurs at a pressure $P_{(ch)}$. During the intake stroke from points 1 to 2, the engine cylinder is filled with air at pressure $P_{(ch)}$, which is controlled by wastegating. During the compression stroke between points 2 and 3, intake charge is compressed to the compression pressure $P_{(comp)}$, which is assumed to be the highest permissible compression pressure.

Figure 2 illustrates an engine according to the present invention, having a turbocharger which is not wastegated. As a result, the charging pressure $P_{(ch)}$ of Figure 2 is considerably greater than that of Figure 5. However, intake valve 16 is closed early and the cylinder filling process is interrupted at point 1A. This traps a smaller volume of air in engine cylinder 14. Timing of the intake valve closing may be selected so that the mass of the trapped intake charge is the same as the case illustrated in Figure 5.

From point 1A to point 2 of Figure 2, the intake charge expands. During the compression stroke

extending between points 2 and 3, charge is compressed to pressure $P_{(comp)}$. Because the mass of intake charge and the compression ratio in the case illustrated in Figure 2 are equal to values of these parameters in the case illustrated in Figure 5, the compression pressures $P_{(comp)}$ in both cases are equal too. As the pressure $P_{(ch)}$ in Figure 2 varies with engine speed, the timing of point 1A is varied so as to maintain the same pressure $P_{(comp)}$.

Figure 3 illustrates operation of an engine according to another aspect of the present invention with late intake valve closing. From point 1 to point 2, cylinder 14 is filled with intake charge. From point 2 to point 2A, the charge is pushed back into intake manifold 34 past open intake valve 16. It is thus seen that intake valve 16 remains open during a substantial portion of the compression stroke. As with Figure 2, the mass of the trapped intake charge is the same as in Figure 5. From point 2A to point 3 of Figure 3, the intake charge is compressed to compression pressure $P_{(comp)}$ which, again, is equal to the maximum compression pressure $P_{(comp)}$ of Figure 5. Note that the exhaust pressure, $P_{(exh)}$ is the same in all cases.

Operation of a turbocharged engine without wastegating according to the cycles shown in Figures 2 and 3 offers the advantage of improved fuel efficiency and, in some cases, higher power density. The intake air supplied to the engine cylinders in the cases illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 is at a higher internal energy level than in the case illustrated in Figure 5. Accordingly, the net energy transferred from the piston to the gas during the intake and compression strokes is less with the engines illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 than that of Figure 5. Because the net energy transfer from the gas to the piston during the expansion and exhaust strokes is the same in all three cases, the net indicated work performed on the piston during the entire cycle, and therefore, the gross indicated mean effective pressure (IMEP) is larger in cases illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 than in Figure 5, all taken at equal fuel consumption. This means that at equal IMEP, fuel consumption in the cases illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 will be lower than that in Figure 5.

If turbocharging with intercooling is used with the engines shown in Figures 2 and 3, the charge air temperature at point 3 can be lower than shown in Figure 5 because the air coming out of the compressor section of the turbocharger can be cooled to approximately the same intake temperature in all three cases. Accordingly, higher compression pressure $P_{(comp)}$ can be allowed in the cases illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 without causing engine knock. Lower air temperature and higher pressure at the end of compression at point 3 translate to larger mass intake charge and, there-

fore, higher engine power density.

Another method for eliminating wastegating is to equip the engine with a variable compression ratio mechanism. Figure 4 illustrates the pressure volume diagram for a turbocharged cycle in which conventional wastegating is replaced by a variable compression ratio. Base clearance volume or a combustion chamber volume is shown in Figure 5 as V_A . In Figure 4, the volume is increased to V_B . Accordingly, the compression ratio is smaller in the system of Figure 4, as compared with Figure 5. As the charging pressure $P_{(ch)}$ in Figure 4 varies with engine speed, the compression ratio is varied so as to maintain the same pressure $P_{(comp)}$ as in Figure 5. Because the mass intake charge is larger in Figure 4 than in Figure 5, while the displacements are equal, Figure 4 represents an engine with higher power density. This density is achieved at the expense of lower indicated efficiency due to reduced compression ratio.

Claims

1. A reciprocating internal combustion engine comprising:
 - at least one piston (12) slidably housed within a cylinder (14) closed by a cylinder head (17);
 - knock sensor means (22) for sensing knocking in said engine and for generating a knock signal in response to sensed knocking;
 - a control unit (30) for receiving said knock signal and for operating a variable valve timing mechanism in response thereto;
 - an intake valve (16) and intake manifold for admitting air/fuel charge into said cylinder, with said intake valve being mounted within said cylinder head;
 - a variable timing mechanism (20) for actuating said intake valve (16), with said timing mechanism (20) being operated by said control unit (30) so that the timing of the intake valve (16) closing is altered when knocking is sensed, such that the amount of the compression work performed by the piston (12) upon the intake charge is reduced, without substantially reducing the piston's expansion work.
2. An engine according to Claim 1, wherein said intake valve closing is delayed or advanced by said control unit when knocking is sensed.
3. A reciprocating internal combustion engine comprising:
 - at least one piston slidably housed within a cylinder, with said piston and cylinder defining a clearance volume when said piston is at top dead centre;
 - knock sensor means for sensing knocking in said engine and for generating a knock signal in response to sensed knocking;
 - a control unit for receiving said knock signal and for operating a variable compression ratio mechanism in response thereto; and
 - a variable compression ratio mechanism for adjusting the magnitude of said clearance volume, with said mechanism being operated by said control unit so that the compression ratio will be decreased when knocking is sensed.
4. An engine according to Claim 1 or 3, further comprising at least one turbocharger for increasing the amount of air/fuel mixture passing into said cylinder.
5. An engine according to Claim 4, wherein said turbocharger comprises a compressor driven by a turbine expander which receives all of the exhaust flowing from said engine under all operating conditions, with said control unit acting to operate the intake valve so as to limit the overall work performed on the inlet charge by both the turbocharger and the engine piston to an amount less than that sufficient to produce knocking.
6. An engine according to Claim 4, further comprising an intercooler positioned between said turbocharger and said intake manifold.
7. A reciprocating internal combustion engine comprising:
 - at least one piston slidably housed within a cylinder;
 - an intake valve and intake manifold for admitting air/fuel charge into said cylinder;
 - at least one turbocharger for increasing the amount of air/fuel mixture passing into said cylinder, with said turbocharger comprising a compressor driven by a turbine expander which receives all of the exhaust flowing from said engine under all operating conditions;
 - sensor means for sensing at least one operating parameter of the engine and for generating an output signal corresponding to the value of the sensed operating parameter;
 - a control unit for receiving said output signal and for operating a variable valve timing mechanism in response thereto; and
 - a variable timing mechanism for actuating said intake valve, with said timing mechanism being operated by said control unit so that the fraction of total compression work performed by the piston is decreased, while the fraction of total compression work performed by the

turbocharger is increased, such that the power output and fuel efficiency of the engine are increased.

8. An engine according to Claim 7, wherein said load sensor means comprises means for measuring the charge pressure within the intake system of said engine. 5
9. An engine according to Claim 7, wherein said control unit operates said variable timing mechanism so that the compression pressure achieved by said engine remains relatively constant throughout a substantial part of the speed and load range of the engine. 10
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10. A method for controlling a reciprocating internal combustion engine so as to avoid knocking operation, comprising the steps of:
 sensing one or more operating parameters related to knock; 20
 generating a knock signal in the event that at least one of said sensed parameters falls within a predetermined range; and
 adjusting the compression ratio or the intake valve timing of the engine in response to said knock signal. 25
11. A method according to Claim 10, wherein said intake valve timing is adjusted such that the closing of the intake valve is delayed or advanced by said control unit when knocking is sensed. 30

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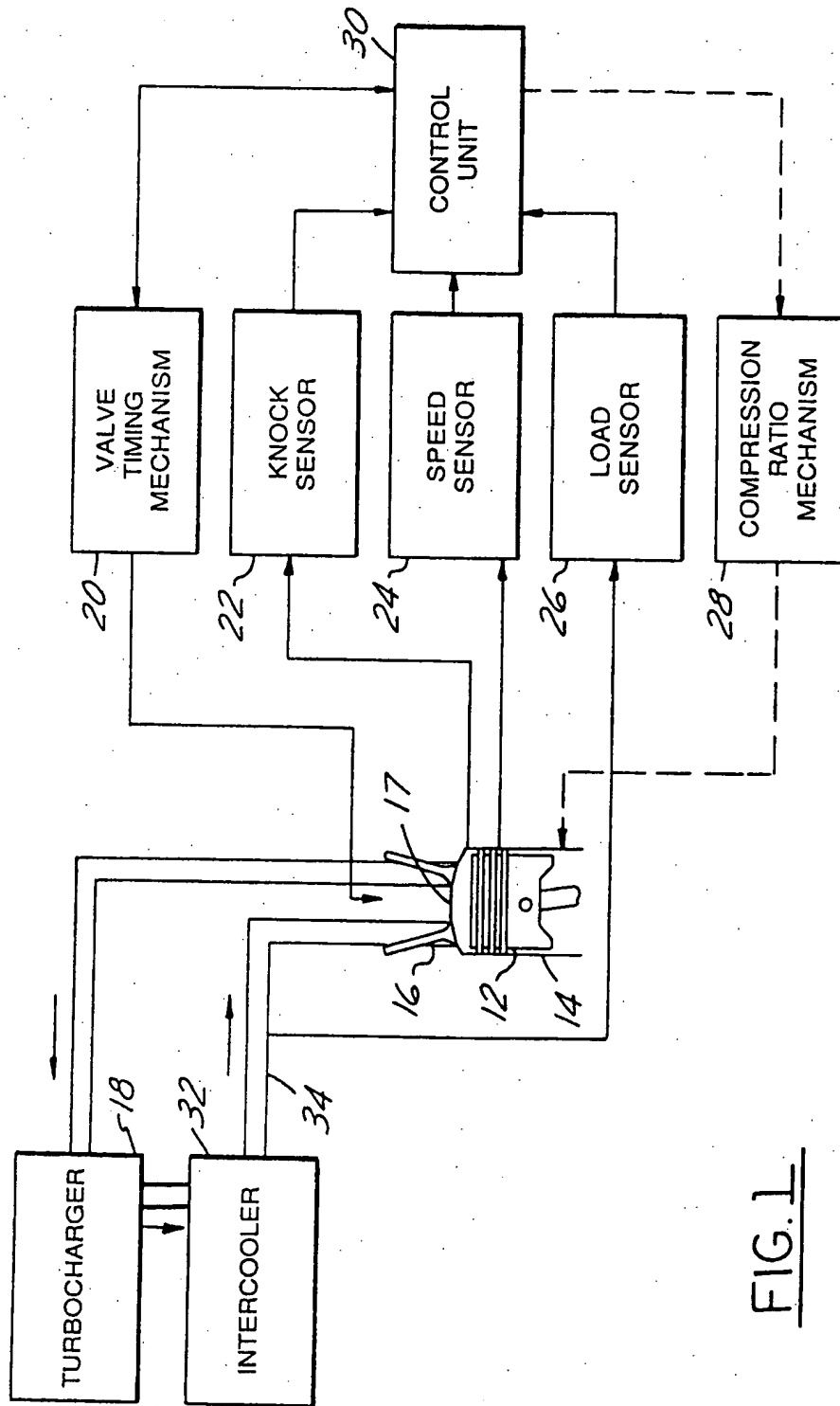


FIG. 1

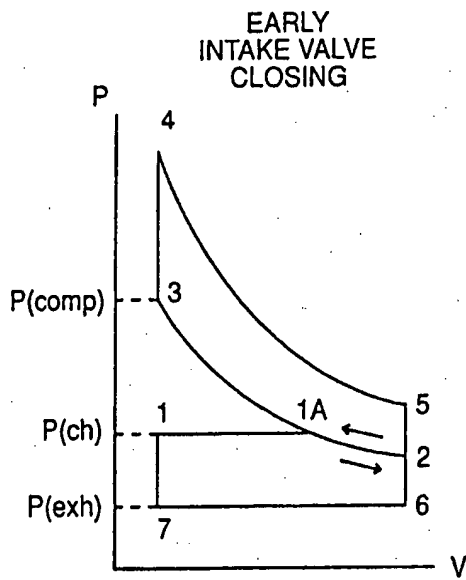


FIG.2

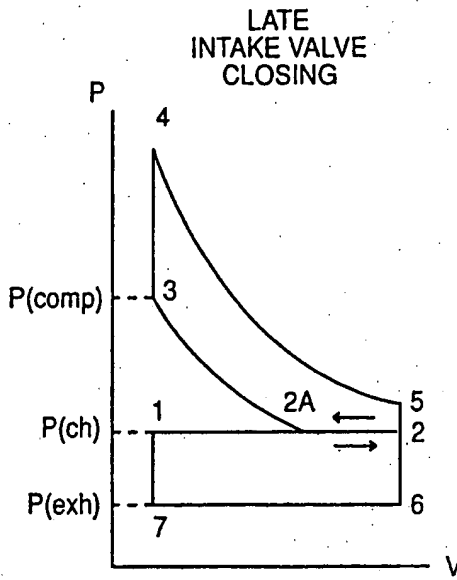


FIG.3

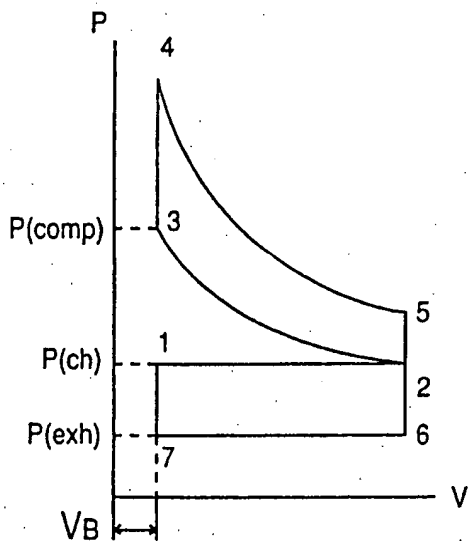
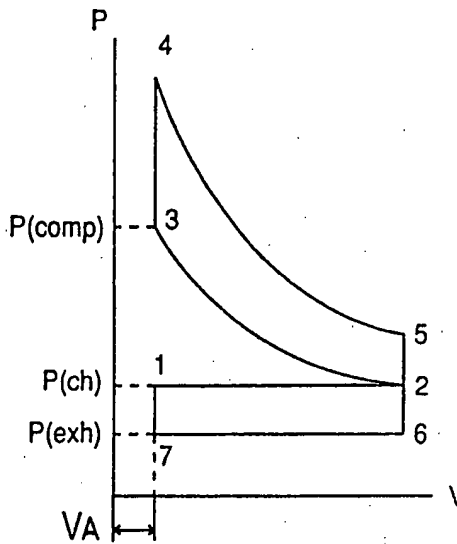


FIG.4



(PRIOR ART)

FIG.5



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 93 30 2888

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
X	FR-A-2 661 212 (USUI KOKUSAI SANGYO KAISHA LTD ET AL.) * the whole document *	1-4, 7, 10-11	F02D13/02
X	US-A-4 995 351 (OHKUBO ET AL.) * abstract *	7, 8	
X	GB-A-2 210 930 (FUJI JUKOGYO KK) * page 3, line 16 - page 4, line 25 *	3	
X	EP-A-0 446 065 (HONDA GIKEN KOGYO KK) * column 2, line 53 - column 3, line 15 *	1, 10	
X	DE-A-3 933 996 (HONDA GIKEN KOGYO KK) * abstract *	1, 10	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 15, no. 222 (M-1121) 6 June 1991 & JP-A-30 64 647 (MAZDA MOTOR CORP) 20 March 1991 * abstract *	4-6	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			F02D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 03 AUGUST 1993	Examiner ALCONCHEL Y UNGRIA
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			